



News

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September 8, 2023

State Announces Abandoned and Derelict Vessel Workgroup

*New advisory group will guide work to tackle hazardous vessels
in public waterways across Oregon*

SALEM, Ore. – The Oregon Department of State Lands today announced a statewide workgroup to guide newly funded efforts to address hazardous boats, ships, and other vessels in public waterways.

In June, the Oregon Legislature [approved \\$18.8 million](#) to begin removing vessels from waterways and developing a statewide abandoned and derelict vessel (ADV) program.

The unprecedented investment, made with funds from the Monsanto settlement, will let the state clean up waterways without impacting Oregon's Common School Fund, said DSL Director Vicki L. Walker.

"Tackling Oregon's abandoned and derelict vessel problem no longer means taking dollars out of the classroom," Walker said. "The \$18.8 million will let us target problem vessels now while also working collaboratively toward long-term solutions."

The State Land Board directed DSL to convene the Abandoned and Derelict Vessel (ADV) Workgroup as part of focused ongoing efforts to address hazardous vessels impacts on public waterways and school funding.

The ADV Workgroup will provide input to state agency partners on near-term action for vessel removals, a program framework, and legislative solutions. Workgroup members bring a wide variety of perspectives and expertise, including ports, marinas, waterway recreation, environmental protection, vessel salvage, and local government. State agency partners are DSL, the Oregon State Marine Board, the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, and Oregon Parks and Recreation Department. [View the current workgroup roster here.](#)

First Workgroup Meeting Set for Tuesday, September 12

The ADV Workgroup's first meeting is Tuesday, September 12 from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. via Zoom.

Meeting details and materials are posted on [DSL's website here](#) and announced via the abandoned and derelict vessels email notice list. [Sign up for ADV email notices here](#).

The workgroup is anticipated to meet at least monthly through April 2024. Workgroup meetings are open to community members and meeting agendas include time for community comments.

Oregon's Hazardous Vessel Problem

Hazardous vessels seriously threaten the health and safety of Oregon's public waterways, contaminating water and degrading habitat, damaging property, and impeding navigation.

These vessels also impact public schools. The Land Board oversees the Common School Fund, as well as Oregon-owned waterways. Revenue from waterway leases, easements, and other paid uses covers most waterway management expenses. But the high cost of vessel cleanups – which can range from tens of thousands to multiple millions – far exceed waterway revenue.

The first cleanup to use new funding is underway with removal of the Tiffany, an 86-foot former fishing vessel, from the Columbia River. Removal cost is anticipated to be approximately \$1.4 million.

The initial \$18.8 million investment provides great momentum, Walker said, with vessel removals and program development work happening collaboratively and at a brisk pace.

Statewide ADV Program Critical to Solutions, Including Future Funding

For years, state, federal, and local partners have worked collaboratively to remove the most hazardous vessels. But lack of a statewide ADV program with dedicated funding resulted in the Common School Fund spending millions removing vessels, while hundreds more piled up in public waterways.

Over the next few months, the ADV Workgroup will provide input on key elements of a statewide ADV program. Broad opportunities for community input are anticipated early in 2024.

In spring 2024, DSL will present the Land Board with a report that includes a program framework addressing prevention, response, enforcement, education and outreach, and potential long-term funding needs and sources, as well as recommendations for legislative action in the 2025 Legislative Session.

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